



*Celebrating 100 Years*

MDOT 100 MOMENTS

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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



1916 to 2016



## OUR STORY

Mississippi was experiencing an automobile revolution in the early 1900's. By 1916, there were around 24,000 vehicles throughout the entire state—and that number would grow. The Mississippi Legislature decided something had to be done about the road system and created the Mississippi State Highway Commission on March 29, 1916. The three-member Commission would oversee the administration of federal funds distributed for road construction and meet the requirements of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads.

The Mississippi Legislature established the first system of state highways in 1924. Each county board of supervisors was responsible for building new roads, while the Highway Commission was tasked with maintenance of those roads. The Legislature officially designated 78 new roads and by 1926, the designation almost doubled to 135.

As America entered the Great Depression in 1930, the Mississippi Legislature enacted the Stansel Act, creating the first effective Highway Department in the state. The Stansel Act called for a primary road system to connect county seats, principal highways of adjoining states and other

areas in the state with a population of 500 or more. In 1940, two critical bridges were built over the Mississippi River—the U.S. Highway 82 Benjamin G. Humphrey's Bridge connected Greenville with Lake Village, Ark., and the Natchez-Vidalia Bridge carried U.S. Highway 84 traffic from Natchez to Vidalia, La.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower secured passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1956, piloting the interstate highway era in Mississippi. The act allowed the federal government to provide 90 percent of funding necessary for the construction of interstates and soon there were interstate projects underway

throughout the state. In 1972, the Highway Corridor Program was passed calling for approximately 1,200 miles of four-lane highways to be constructed. This resulted in economic productivity in almost every area of the state.

In 1987, the Mississippi Legislature enacted an unprecedented \$1.6 billion long-range highway program to construct over 1,000 miles of four-lane highway. With highway user revenues for funding, Advocating Highways for Economic Advancement and Development [A.H.E.A.D.] established an unparalleled “pay as you go” method. The program called for highways to be built in phases which facilitated four-lane highway development in the state.

Mississippi implemented changes regarding its Highway Commission and Highway Departments in 1992 as the two departments were combined to form the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) governed by the Mississippi Transportation Commission as it stands today. Similar to the previous Highway Commission, oversight of transportation resources and operations were entrusted in a three-member elected commission representing the central, northern and southern areas of the state.

The Mississippi Legislature established the Multi-Modal Transportation Improvement Program in 2002, which provided funds for high

priority improvement projects to airports, ports, railroads and public transit systems. By annually providing 10 million dollars in support, MDOT continues its objective in sustaining an efficient and effective intermodal system. Today, this program remains a valuable resource for strategic investments throughout the state while MDOT supports over 2,600 rail miles and 62 public transit providers across Mississippi.

Mississippi's transportation history would be changed forever in August 2005 after Hurricane Katrina unleashed unprecedented damage to the Gulf Coast's infrastructure leaving both the Bay St. Louis and Biloxi Bay Bridges crippled beyond

repair. In 2007 and in record time, MDOT replaced the U.S. Highway 90 Biloxi Bay Bridge with a new bridge that is higher, wider and longer than the original bridge completed in 1961. Originally built in 1953, the destroyed U.S. Highway 90 Bay St. Louis Bridge was replaced with a new and modern design. Both bridges feature original artwork from local artists.

In 2008, an interchange of Interstates 20 and 55, and U.S. Highway 49 that came to be known as “The Stack” would improve traffic congestion in the Jackson-metro area.

By 2015, transportation funding was at the forefront of the national picture with the signing of

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. In North Mississippi, expansion of the state's interstate system came with the opening of the first section of Interstate 269 in October 2015. Once complete, Interstate 269 will form a 30-mile loop through Mississippi and Tennessee, and relieve traffic pressure on Interstates 55 and 69 while also connecting Interstates 40 and 55. As expansion and growth continues, Interstate 269 will be vital in promoting safety and economic development throughout the region.

Today, MDOT has expanded to 35 divisions and six districts comprised of over 3,400 employees

responsible for providing a safe intermodal transportation network that is planned, designed, constructed and maintained. Although Mississippi has managed to develop a robust transportation system over the past 100 years, funding continues to fall short of the state's infrastructure needs, and MDOT has been forced to shift to a maintenance-only approach and focus on system preservation.

Transportation is the driving force of a strong economy and even with limited resources, MDOT will continue working to find innovative solutions to ensure a solid future for Mississippi's transportation network.

**MARCH 29  
1916**



State Highway  
Commission  
Formed

**1930**



Stansel Act  
Signed

**1956**



Federal-Aid  
Highway Act

**1972**



Highway Corridor  
Program Passed

**1987**



Advocating Highways for  
Economic Advancement  
and Development  
[A.H.E.A.D.] signed

**1992**



Mississippi  
Department of  
Transportation  
Formed

**2007**



Biloxi Bay and  
Bay St. Louis Bridges  
opened after  
Hurricane Katrina

**2015**



Section of I-269  
Open to  
the Public

**2016**



Celebrating 100 Years  
of Service to the  
People of Mississippi